

COMBUSTIBLE SIDING FACT SHEET

With the exception of the roof, siding material is the structural component of a home that is most vulnerable to wildfire.

Exterior walls are susceptible to wildfire flames, conductive heat, and radiant heat. Flames and heat can ignite combustible wall coverings and debris. When exterior walls ignite, the fire can spread to other components of the building such as the roof, soffit, windows, and doors, resulting in substantial damage to or total loss of the building.

Wind-blown embers are also sources of ignition. Embers can become trapped in cracks in walls, window openings, and door trim boards and ignite combustible materials, which can ignite wall coverings.

The fire resistance of exterior walls depends primarily on what the walls are constructed of and the amount of nearby combustible material. Some types of construction materials such as vinyl siding do not burn, but can melt when exposed to high temperatures, allowing the fire to reach the underlying wall components and penetrate the interior of the building.

FIRESMART BEST PRACTICE

The FireSmart best practice is to ensure that exterior wall coverings are noncombustible or fire-resistant and not susceptible to melting. Concrete, fibre-cement board, stucco, and masonry are all recommended materials. Examples of the types of coverings that are not recommended are wood and vinyl siding.

LIVING WITH COMBUSTIBLE SIDING

Noncombustible siding is the FireSmart best practice, but combustible siding is used extensively across Canada. If your home has combustible siding, these minimum standard should be met.

For more information on ways to reduce the potential impact a wildfire will have on your home and neighbourhood, visit www.firesmartcanada.ca

HOME

- Minimum of 17 metres of mitigated space between your home and the next home or structure.
- Noncombustible Class A roof that is in good repair and free of combustible debris build up.
- 15 centimetres of ground-to-siding noncombustible clearance.
- Multi-pane, tempered glass windows with screening.
- Garage and entrance doors that are properly fitted and well maintained.
- Noncombustible vents with 3 millimetre screening or ASTM fire rated vents.
- Gutters and downspouts constructed of noncombustible materials, such as galvanized steel, copper and aluminum with leaf or gutter guard. Ensure metal drip edge is in place as part of the roof assembly.
- Fire rated composite decking material that is sheathed with noncombustible material, such as fibre cement board or metal screening.
- Noncombustible fencing materials such as, metal, chain link, metal privacy slats, concrete stone or masonry.



Priority Zone 1a 0-1.5 metres

A noncombustible surface should extend for 1.5 metres around the entire home and any attachments, such as decks.

- Noncombustible landscaping materials, such as gravel, brick, or concrete in this critical area adjacent to your home.
- Woody shrubs, trees or tree branches should be avoided in this zone, any that are present should be properly mitigated.
- Create a noncombustible zone underneath and for 1.5 metres around trailers/vehicles.
- Mitigate sheds and other structures to the same standards as those of your home.

Priority Zone 1 1.5-10 metres

- Plant a low density of fire-resistant plants and shrubs. Avoid having any woody debris, including mulch, as it provides potential places for fires to start.
- Store items, such as firewood piles, construction materials, patio furniture, tools and decorative pieces at least 10 metres from home and any structures and into Zone 2.
- Maintain grass to a minimum of 10 centimetres in height.

Priority Zone 2 10-30 metres

- Thin and prune evergreen trees to reduce hazard in this area.
- Within 30 metres of your home, selectively remove evergreen trees to create at least 3 metres of horizontal space between the single or grouped tree crowns and remove all branches to a height of 2 metres from the ground on the remaining evergreen trees.
- If possible, pruning trees up to 100 metres from your home (Zone 3) is recommended.
- Regularly clean up accumulations of fallen branches, dry grass and needles from the ground to eliminate potential surface fuels.

Priority Zone 3 30-100 metres

- Look for opportunities to create a fire break by creating space between trees and other potentially flammable vegetation.
- Thin and prune evergreen trees to reduce hazard in this area.
- Regularly clean up accumulations of fallen branches, dry grass and needles from on the ground to eliminate potential surface fuels.